

NICHOLAS MONARDES ON GUAIAIC

The Guaiacan that is called the wood of the Indias, was discovered forthwith, when the firste Indias was founde, whiche was the Ilande of Sancto Domingo, where is great quantitie thereof. There was an Indian that gave knowledge thereof to his Maister, in this maner. A Spanyarde that did suffer greate paines of the Poxes, whiche he had by the companie of an Indian woman, but his servaunte beyng one of the Phisitions of that countrie, gave unto hym the water of Guaiacan, wherewith not onely his greevous paines were taken awaie that he did suffer: but healed verie well of the evill, with the whiche many other Spanyardes, that were infected with the same evill were healed, the whiche was communicated immediatly, with them that came from thence, hether to Seville, and from thence it was divulged throughout all Spaine, and from thence through all the worlde, for that the infection wente sowen abroad throughout, and surely for this evill it is the beste, and the moste chief remedie of as many as hether unto hath been founde, and with moste assuraunce, and moste certaintie, it healeth and cureth the saied disease, if thei bee well handled and this water given as it ought to bee, it is certaine that it healeth moste perfectly, without turnyng to fall againe, except the sicke man doe returne to tumble in the same bosome, where he tooke the firste.

Our Lorde God would from whence the evill of the Poxe came, from thence should come the remedy for them. For that the Poxe came into these partes from the Indias, and firste of all from Sancto Domingo. The poxe bee so common amongst the Indians, and so familiare, as the Measelles bee unto us, and well nere the moste parte of the Indians, bothe menne and women hath them, without makyng thereof any scruple, and thei came firste in this sorte.

In the yere of our Lorde God 1493, in the warres that the Catholike kyng had in Naples, with kyng Charles of Fraunce, that was called greate heade: in this tyme sir Christofer Colon, came from the discoverie that he had made in the Indias, whiche was Sancto Domingo, and other Ilandes, and he brought with hym from Sancto Domingo, a greate number of Indians, bothe men and women, whiche he carried with him to Naples, where the Catholike kyng was at that tyme, who

had then concluded the warres, for that there was peace betwene the twoo Kynges, and the hostes did communicate together, the one with the other. And Colon beeyng come thether with his Indians, the moste parte of them went with the fruite of their countrie whiche was the Poxe, the Spanyardes beganne to have conversation with the Indian women, in suche sorte, that the men and women of the Indias, did infecte the Campe of the Spaniards, Italians, and Almaines, the Catholike kyng had then of all these Nations, and there were many that was infected of the evill. And after the hostes did common together, the fire did kindle in the campe of the kyng of Fraunce: of the whiche did folowe that in short tyme, the one and the other were infected of this evill seede: and from thence it hath spred abroad into all the worlde.

At the beginnyng it had diverse names: the Spanyardes did thinke that it had been given them by the Frenche men, and thei called it the Frenche evil. The Frenchemen thought that in Naples, and of them of the Countrie, the evill had been given them, and thei called it the evill of Naples. And thei of Almaine seyng that of the conversation of the Spanyardes, thei came to it, thei called it the Spanishe Skabbe, and other called it the Measelles of the Indias, and with muche truthe, seyng that from thence came the evill.

Emongeste the greate Phisitions of that tyme, there was greate opinions of the cause, and originall of the infirmitie. The one sorte saied that it came of the evill Melancholie meates, that the hostes of necessitie had eaten, as wilde hearbes, and muche gardeine hearbes, and rootes of hearbes, Asses, and Horses, and other like thinges, that ingender suche like infirmities, corruptyng and burnyng the bloode. Others there were that did attribute it, to the conjunctions of Saturne and Mars, and thei did applie it to the heavenly influence, with this thei did put divers and sundrie names. Some called it the Leprosie, others Swin Poxe, other Mentegra, others the Deathly evill, others Elephansia, without certaine assurance what diseases thei were. For they were ignoraunt that it was a newe disease, and they would reduce it to some already knowen and written of, and then commyng to our Guaiacan, whose name was put of the Indians, and of them very wel knowen, and so thei had called it and doe call it, in all the worlde, and callyng it also the woodde of the Indias. Of this woodde many have written and muche, one sorte saiyng that it was Ebano, others that it

was a kinde of Boxe, and many other names whiche they have named, it is a newe Tree and never seen in our partes, nor in any other of the discoveries, and as the countrie is newe: so is the tree a newe thinge.

What soever he be it is a great tree, of the greatnes of an Oke: he doth caste out many bowes, the rinde it doeth cast from it beyng drie, greate, and full of Gumme, he hath his hart very greate, it is well neere like to blacke, all is very harde as much and more than Ebano is. It doth caste a little leafe and hard, and every yere it doeth bryng forthe yeallow flowers, of the whiche they doe ingender a rounde fruite, with little kernelles within it, of the greatnes of Medlers, of those Trees there are greate aboundaunce in Sancto Domingo.

And after this they have founde an other Tree, of the kind of this Guaiacan, in Saint Jhon de Puerto Rico, which is an other Ilande nere to that of Sancto Domingo, suche an other tree as he is, savyng that he is lesse, and the body of the tree and the bowes are lesse, and it hath scarcely any harte, and if it hath any it is very little, and that is in the body of the tree. For that the bowes hath none, it is of more sweet smell and more bitter then the Guaiacan, that is nowe used in our tyme, for gettingyng that of Sancto Domingo, and for his marveilous effectes they call it the holye Woodde, and surely with reason: for that it is of a better workyng then that of Sancto Domingo, whiche is seen by experience, but that the one and the other is a marveilous remedy, for to cure the disease of the Poxe: of the whiche and of every one of them the water is made, and it is taken for this infirmitie, and for many others in this forme.

They take twelve ounces of the wood made small, and twoo ounces of the Rinde of the same woodde broken, and they cast it to steepe in three Pottels of Water, in a newe pot, that will holde sumwhat more, for the space of xxiiii. houres: and the pot beyng well stopt, they seeth it at a soft fyre of kindled Coales, untill the two Pottels be sodde awaie, and one remaining. And this is to be seen at the time the water is put to it, puttyng therein one Pottle, they do put in a little Rodde, and they doe marke where the water is of one Pottle, and by that measure and marke they shall see when the twoo is sodde awaie, and the one Pottell remaineth, after the water is sodden, they put it to coole, and doe straine it, and keepe it in a glassed vessell, and forthwith upon the saide sodded woodde, they cast foure Pottels of water, and they seeth it till one bee sodden awaie, and this water must be strained

and kept aparte: and it must be taken in this forme.

After that the sicke man is poured with the counsell of a Phisition, let hym be put into a warme Chamber, and kept from the colde and from ayre, and beyng layed in his bedde, that he take early in the mornyng tenne ounces of Water, of that which was first made well warmed, and let hym be clothed, so that he may sweate wel, and let him kepe his sweat at the least two houres, and after he hath swet, let hym be made cleane of his swet, and take a warme Shirte, and the rest of his Linen clothes, and foure howers after he hath swette, let him eate Reasinges, Almonds and Bisket, and this in reasonable quantitie, and let hym drinke of the water that was made at the seconde tyme, the quantity that he hath neede of, and of the selfe same let him drinke in the day tyme, and eight howres after he hath eaten, let him retourne to take the first water, and let hym take other ten ounces well warmed, and then sweate other twoo howers, and after his sweat let him be made cleane, and then take warme cloathes, and one hower after he hath swet let hym make his supper of the same Reasings, Almonds, and Bisket, and drinke of the seconde Water. This order he muste have the first fiftene daies, excepte he hath notable weakenesse, and in suche case he must bee succoured with gevyng hym to eate of a little Chiken, joynctly, with the rest of the Diet, and in them that be leane, that can not beare so much Diet, it is sufficient that they take it for nine daies, and at the ende of them he may eate a little Chiken roasted, and if in case the sicke man be debilitated, and that he can not suffer the Diet, let hym have from the beginnyng a very small Chiken, goyng forward increasyng in the process of tyme, and beyng past the 15 daies, let hym retourne to purge himselfe at the sixtine daies, and let him take the waight of five shillinges of the substaunce of Canafistola, taken out by Strainer or other thinge respondent thereunto, and that day let him drinke no stronge Water, but of the simple, and the next day after the Purgation, let him retourne to take accordyng to the aforesaied order. Taking in the morning and in the evenyng the stronge water with his sweatings, and eatyng and drinkyng the same. Savyng that in place of a Chiken he may eate halfe a roasted Pullet, or sumwhat more, and this second tyme let hym take it for other xx. daies, in the whiche time he may go rising in his chamber, beyng apparelled and kepte warme. And at the ende of them, hee shall retourne to purge hym selfe an other tyme, and hee must have a special

care to keepe good order, and after hee have taken the water for other fortie daies, keepyng hym selfe from Women and from Wine especially, and in place of Wine, that he drinke the simple water of the wood, and if hee will not doe it, then drinke of water sodde with Anis seede or Fenell seede, suppyng little at night and eating no fleshe.

This is the beste waie that the water of the wood should be taken, whiche doeth heale many infirmities incurable, where other Medicines could not doe this effecte, and this water is the beste remedy that is in the worlde, for to heale the disease of the Poxe, what so ever or of what kinde so ever it bee, for that it doeth unroote it, for ever without any more commyng againe. And in this it hath his principall prerogative and excellencie, this Water is good for the Dropsy, for the shortness of breath, for the Falling sicknes, for the evill of the Bladder, and of the Raines: for the paynes of the Joyntes: for all evils caused of colde Humors: for ventositie, and for large and importunate diseases, where the ordinarie benefites of Phisitions hath not profited. Chifely it doth profite where the evill dispositions be, that have proceeded at any tyme of the evill of the Poxe. There be many that with this wood have made manye mixtures, makyng Syrropes thereof, and surely it doth good effect. But my judgemente and opinion is, that hee whiche shall take the water of the wood, let hym take it in the maner as it is saide, without any minglyng thereof, for that by experience it hath been seen so to make the better worke, this water maketh good the teeth, makyng them white, and affirmyng and fastning them, by continuall washing of them, it is hot and drie in the second degree.

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